

Spark Gap

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*The Official
Newsletter of the
Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*

MARC

Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P.O. Box 836
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ARRL at National Hurricane Conference

ARRL:

**NEWINGTON,
CT, Apr 23, 2007**

— Amateur Radio had a seat at the table during the 29th National Hurricane Conference, April 2-6 in New Orleans.

The annual gathering,

which serves as “the nation’s forum for education and professional training in hurricane preparedness,” features Amateur Radio’s role in severe weather situations. More than 2500 government, industry, military, and volunteers attended this year’s gathering. The Hurricane Watch Net (HWN), WX4NHC — the Amateur Radio station at the National Hurricane Center — and ARRL collaborated to present a training session at the conference on April 3.

“This gave Amateur Radio operators and several representatives of the ARRL Field Organization leadership a chance to discuss their experiences and lessons learned during recent hurricane seasons — especially Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that affected so much of the Gulf Coast in 2005,” said ARRL HQ’s Field Organization Team Leader Steve Ewald, WV1X, who moderated the forum. Among the presenters was Alabama Section Manager Greg Sarratt, W4OZK. “The Amateur Radio presentations were very successful. Amateurs from several different areas of disaster experience spoke about what Amateur Radio experienced and has done to be better prepared for the next large disaster,” Sarratt observed. “Attendees listened intently and posed very good questions.” Sarratt says

attendees reviewed ARRL enhancements and the work and recommendations of the National Emergency Response Planning Committee (NERPC).

New Orleans ARRL Emergency Coordinator Joel Colman, NO5FD, explained how their experiences during and after Hurricane Katrina have led to an even better working relationship with the Orleans Parish Fire Department. Amateur Radio operators are now setting up a ham radio station at the fire department’s communications facility, and they are offering Amateur Radio license classes for 911 operators and others.

*Season
Begins
June 1st*

· Cedric Walker, K5CFW, an ARRL Technical Specialist from New Orleans and active ARES member, discussed the close relationship that has developed between Amateur Radio operators with their communication skills and Flotilla 45 of the US Coast

Guard Auxiliary.

· Interim American Red Cross President Jack McGuire spoke on what the Red Cross has done to better prepare for larger disasters, including updating memoranda of understanding and hiring more permanent staff and placing them in critical locations within FEMA regions. “The Red Cross has purchased new technology and food, water and clean-up kits and have staged them in critical hurricane areas,” Sarratt reported. Sarratt assessed the 2007 National Hurricane Conference as a very informative event. “This conference is a must-attend event for all EmComm leadership!” he said.

A RENEWED INTEREST *by Matt Payne, KB9UJE*

I admit it, I'm hooked. It's an addiction to be sure, but I don't think it's an unhealthy one. Like a moth to a flame, I'm drawn inexorably towards my television every Wednesday night



as the clock creeps toward 8 PM. At home, phones and pagers go unanswered, and the blinds are drawn. At work, coworkers scramble to answer 911 lines as I stare at the television screen. One of my partners at work held a mirror in front of my face to make sure I was still

breathing. But they should have known better, It was Wednesday. It was 8 PM. Jericho was on.

And while the show's remise - survival in a land decimated by nuclear war - is compelling enough, I can find a geek connection in another way as well. My inner ham radio self is pleased that Morse Code plays a prominent part in the series, and ham radios have played minor roles in their own right. Since traditional lines of communication have been knocked out, much of the show's drama can be linked to the difficulty citizens of the fictional town of Jericho, Kansas have in obtaining information. But show regular Robert Hawkins seems to be a step ahead in the information arena. And that's due in no small part to his knowledge of Morse Code and radio theory.

In one of the episodes, Robert Hawkins listens to a Yeasu FT-101F and copies down a cryptic message, along with [presumably] the names of the cities that fell victim to atomic attack. And while the TV and silver screens have had their share of fake Morse Code in the past, the Morse Code that we heard Robert decode was real. Hams in several online forums were quick to provide a translation: Delta code delta, two minute warning.....Score remains scoreless.....

But it turns out, the producers of Jericho had a bigger role planned for Samuel Morse's invention. At the very beginning, a short message in Morse code is played over the title screen of the series, which is the word

"Jericho" spelled in TV static on a black background. And in some cases, the short snippets of code contained hints or facts about the progression of the series. Hams everywhere were suddenly approached by formerly disinterested relatives, friends, and often complete strangers, inquiring about Morse code. Knowing Morse code now took on a whole new appearance to viewers. I'd imagine long time CW operators were both amused and amazed. Morse code had just achieved a certain degree of "mainstream coolness".

This has had an interesting effect. Jericho threads exist on both eHam and QRZ forums. Hams are contributing to Wikipedia and other sources weekly by providing translations for the messages. And that's a good thing for me, because I'm not nearly good enough to copy the actual messages when they appear on the TV. But it's also inspired me to attempt to brush up on my CW skills. Inspired so much in fact, that I recently sent away for a Morse code improvement course.

Although I find it unlikely that we'll be nuked anytime soon, the thought of QRP operation, low power requirements, and overall handiness of CW compelled me to invest some time in improving my skills. I'm wondering how many other hams have been bitten by the same bug, and how many new licenses may be issued as a result of this series. Even though some of the hams were angered by the portrayal of a ham in the pilot episode, the overall effect on our hobby may be positive. Inclusion on a TV show, even tongue-in-cheek, is exposure, and ham radio has suffered long enough from lack of exposure. Perhaps this series can help turn the tide. But either way, don't bother calling me on Wednesday at 8 PM. The radio will be off.

Note: Do you know what message was given during each episode? No....then check here next month for a complete listing. Or...if you've been watching and paying attention, maybe you know already. LH

Officers

President:
Meredith 'JR'
Osborne, KB9HSE

Vice President:
Dave Daily,
KB9LOT

Secretary:
Carol Osborne,
KC9CFK

Treasurer:
Brenda Haler,
KC9EBL

Repeater Trustee:
Jay Chrisman,
AA9YP

Spark Gap Editor:
Bob LaGrange,
N9SIU

Technician Class Ends

The Technician class completed on May 2nd with a class of four students. Thanks to Scott Blaydes, Tyson Burris, Grant Black and Robert Tribby for attending our Spring 2007 Technician class.

We hope to be able to offer another class in the Fall of 2007.

Special thanks to Steve Carmean, Bob LaGrange, Matt Payne and Dave Wendt for volunteering as instructors. All did a great job!

Recent Activities by MARC Members

Hilltop Exercise at Independence Park

On April 28th several MARC members set up temporary stations and participated in the Hilltop Exercise. Thanks to Dave Daily, KB9LOT, Jack Parker, W8ISH, Jay Chrisman, AA9YP, and Chris Frederick, KG6ZIJ. From the photos on the website it looks like all had a good time.

Ardent Sentry Drill

MARC members also took part in the Ardent Sentry drill held recently in central Indiana. This was part of a larger drill that took place off the coast of Alaska, in Northeast United States and parts of Canada. Bob LaGrange, N9SIU, coordinated the MARC activities. We hope to have more information next month including a full list of volunteers. KC9GCH, Linda Harshbarger, participated as the representative from Clarian Hospitals (Methodist, IU, Riley).

Hawaii Moonbounce a Hit!

ARRL: (Apr 24, 2007) — Bruce Clark, K0YW, operating as KH7X from the station of Alex Benton, KH6YY, made the first successful 2.3 GHz EME (Earth-Moon-Earth) contact from Hawaii April 23. “This is the first time EME from Hawaii has been worked on this band,” reports Ron Hashiro, AH6RH, who assisted in the effort. Clark made contact with well-known VHF/UHF and moonbounce enthusiast Al Ward, W5LUA, in Texas. Hashiro says the Hawaii operation was set up in a tent pitched next to the 12-foot TV receive-only (TVRO) dish used for the antenna, in order to minimize feed line losses. “The CW signal was just above the noise level and sounded ‘watery,’ as if the speaker were being held underwater,” Hashiro reported. “The warbling tone was much worse than Arctic flutter.” He said Doppler shift was on the order of 3 kHz. CW was sent at about 10 WPM. K0YW made additional contacts with several other stations on 2.3 GHz as well as on 1.2 GHz EME, Hashiro said. News of Clark’s temporary Hawaii moonbounce setup made the April 21 edition of the *Honolulu Advertiser*. Others assisting in the moonbounce experiment included KH6ND, KH7U, WH6GS and AH6NF.

WA9RDF Repeater
146.835/
146.235 MHz
151.4 Hz PL
Tone

Weekly Net
Every Sunday
at 7PM EST

Tune in to hear
the ARRL
Newsline!

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors a weekly traffic and social net on our repeater. The net begins at 7:00 p.m. local time, and features local news, announcements, and NTS traffic, as well as rebroadcasts of Amateur Radio Newsline.

Congratulations to the Happy Couple!

Congratulations to our own Dave Wendt, KA9OOH, and his lovely wife Kathy on their recent wedding. Take a look on our website for a picture of the bride and groom. So Dave, how soon before Kathy gets her license?

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time. This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills. Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby. For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!



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2007 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

MAY 2007

18-20 Dayton Hamvention, Dayton, OH
19 MARC Meeting - 8 AM
VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
26 500 Festival Parade, Indianapolis
To volunteer or for more information contact Mike Palmer N9FEB at www.indyhams.com

JUNE 2007

8-9 White River Township Strawberry Festival
(Fri 3 PM - 10PM; Sat 9 AM - 10:30 PM)
Pleasant Grove Elementary School, 5199 West Fairview Road, Greenwood; To volunteer or for more information contact Jack Parker, W8ISH
16 MARC Meeting - 8 AM
VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
23-24 Field Day
Location to be determined; For more information contact JR Osborne, KB9HSE
23 Sprint Triathlon, Indianapolis
To volunteer or for more information contact Mike Palmer N9FEB at www.indyhams.com
29-30 Greenwood Freedom Festival, Greenwood
To volunteer or for more information contact Jack Parker, W8ISH

JULY 2007

7 Indianapolis Communications & Technology Expo, Indianapolis
Camp Sertoma, US Hwy 52 East at German Church Road; Talk-in 146.76
14 Tour-De-Cure, Indianapolis
To volunteer or for more information contact Mike Palmer N9FEB at www.indyhams.com
21 MARC Meeting - 8 AM
VEC Testing immediately following the meeting (approx. 9:30 am)
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.
See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.